



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Land Use Services Department

Advance Planning Division



HEARING DATE: October 21, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO: 3

Project Description

Vicinity Map



APN: Multiple

Applicant: Land Use Services Department

Proposal: A) General Plan Safety Element Amendment to amend 14 Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps to include revised State-designated Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zones, a state-approved general geologic hazard area, and three County-designated fault hazard zones.

B) General Plan Safety Element Amendment to amend 36 Hazard Overlay Maps to include Airport Safety Review Area 3 for each public use airport within the unincorporated area of the County and to amend the noise contours for five airports to conform with the published noise contours for each airport.

Index: CW1-849N

Community: Countywide

Location: A) Desert Area from the I-40 east of Newberry Springs trending southeast to just north of the City of Twentynine Palms; Forest Falls area; Crafton Hills area; Lake Gregory area; and Lucerne Valley area.

B) Areas around all public use airports in the County which includes the following: Apple Valley, Baker, Barstow-Daggett, Big Bear City, Cable, Chemehuevi Valley, Chino, Hesperia, Hi-Desert, Needles, Ontario International, Redlands Municipal, San Bernardino International, Southern California Logistics, Sun Hill, and Twentynine

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- A. THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT the proposed General Plan Amendments to the Safety Element.
- B. ADOPT the findings as contained in the staff report; and
- C. FILE the Notice of Exemption.

BACKGROUND:

Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps

On May 1, 2003, the State Department of Mines and Geology adopted 11 revised Earthquake Fault Zone Maps within San Bernardino County in accordance with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (formerly the Special Studies Zones Act). The following U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps were affected: Prado Dam, Hector, Sleeping Beauty, Sunshine Peak, Lavic Lake, Lavic SE, Morgan's Well, Hidalgo Mtn., Deadman Lake NW, Deadman Lake SW, and Deadman Lake SE. The first part of the proposed General Plan Amendment is to incorporate these revisions into the County's Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps which are components of the safety element of the County General Plan. The information contained in these amended maps is already in effect as the State maps have been adopted and take precedence over our County hazard maps. Since the adoption of the state maps, the County maps have been annotated with a note to refer staff and the public to the updated state maps.

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The second part of this proposed General Plan Amendment is to place a general Geologic Hazard Area over the Forest Falls area. This addition has been requested by the County Geologist. On December 8, 2003, the County Geologist received new maps prepared by the California Division of Mines and Geology for the community of Forest Falls showing revised rockfall susceptibility areas, areas of debris-flow potential, and potential debris avalanche areas. Staff proposes to incorporate these new maps into the County-designated Geological Hazard Overlay District by placing a general geologic hazard area on the hazard map for Forest Falls (FI25D) referring staff and the public to these new rockfall susceptibility maps. The level of detail on the state maps is such that the county maps would become unreadable if they were adopted into the County system in total. Since the adoption of the state maps, the County maps have been annotated with a note to refer staff and the public to the state maps.

The third part of this proposed General Plan Amendment is to place County-Designated Fault Hazard Zones on four Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps. Again, these additions are at the request of the County Geologist. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act requires the State of California to delineate earthquake fault zones along known active faults. The criteria for zoning include the requirement for the fault to be *sufficiently active and well-defined*. In many areas, active faults do not meet this criteria due to burial by young sediments and destruction of surface fault features by previous development. In addition, the Alquist-Priolo maps are not intended to show all faults that have the potential for rupture.

For a number of years, Riverside County has designated fault hazard zones along several potentially active and suspected active mapped faults that are not included within Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. The level of investigation required by Riverside County within these zones is much less than what is required within the Alquist-Priolo Zones. In addition, the same single-family residential exemptions that apply to the State zones apply to the County-designated zones. Consequently, the San Bernardino County Geologist has recommended that San Bernardino County adopt similar zones along faults that may pose a hazard to developments placed across their traces. He is initially recommending three known potentially active faults for inclusion with County-designated fault hazard zones – the Reservoir Canyon Fault, the Lake Gregory Fault, and the Lucerne Valley Fault.

Reservoir Canyon Fault

The Reservoir Canyon fault is a northeast-trending fault that lies along the northwest margin of the Crafton Hills. This fault is shown on several published geologic maps and forms a prominent fault scarp in Pleistocene-age alluvium. Studies conducted for a proposed project in the area concluded that the fault was at least potentially active and building setbacks were recommended. Continued development pressure in the area necessitates that the fault be zoned.

Lake Gregory Fault

The Lake Gregory fault is an east-west trending fault that extends from Seeley Flat, through Lake Gregory Village, beneath Lake Gregory and into the Valley of the Moon. The fault was first mapped as an inactive fault by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1979. However, the results of recent geologic investigations, indicate that the fault is probably active and therefore, capable of producing surface rupture. This fault is coincident with the commercial portion of Lake Gregory Village. It should be evaluated wherever commercial development is proposed across its trace.

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Lucerne Valley Fault

The Helendale fault is a known active fault that is associated with relatively recent seismicity. Most of the Helendale fault is included within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The Lucerne Valley fault is a parallel splay fault that has been mapped approximately ½ mile southwest of the main trace of the Helendale fault. Although the Lucerne Valley fault is not currently included within an Alquist-Priolo Zone, it is shown on published geologic maps as an active fault. This fault bisects the main commercial corridor in Lucerne Valley. Commercial developments may be proposed across its trace.

The County Geologist recommends that each of these faults be included within a County-designated fault hazard zone and incorporated in the Geologic Hazard Overlay District. He recommends a standard zone width of 600 feet on either side of the mapped fault trace. This zone width follows the format of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. It is proposed that the County-designated fault hazard zones are to be distinct from the Alquist-Priolo Zones as shown on the Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps. There are four USGS Quadrangle maps impacted by these additions – FH32D (Yucaipa), FH14D (Silverwood Lake), FH22D (San Bernardino North), and FI01D (Lucerne Valley).

All of these proposed changes to the Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps are consistent with General Plan Policy GE-1(a)(iv) which states that the County will “maintain clear and comprehensive mapping of all geologic hazards” and with General Plan Policy GE-7 which states “the County shall reserve the right to require site-specific geotechnical analysis and mitigation for development located contiguous to potentially active faults, if deemed necessary by the County Geologist.”

Hazard Overlay Maps (Airports and Noise)

On January 1, 2004, Assembly Bill 2776 became effective changing the buyer notification requirements for lands around airports. According to the new law, any person who intends to offer land for sale or lease within an *airport influence area* is required to disclose the fact that the land is within such an area to any person buying or leasing the property. This effectively means that all jurisdictions with public use airports within their boundaries need to publish maps showing the identified Airport Influence Areas for all public use airports. AB 2776 defines an airport influence area as the area in which “current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety, or airspace protection factors may significantly affect land uses or necessitate restrictions on those uses as determined by an airport land use commission.” In accordance with General Plan Policy AV-1, staff has determined this area to be either the Airport Safety Areas outlined in the County Development Code or the safety/referral areas published in an adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan, whichever includes the larger area.

This proposed General Plan Amendment maps Airport Safety Review Area 3 (AR3) for all public airports within the unincorporated area of the County. These review areas have been effective since 1988 but have never been mapped on the Official Hazard Overlay Maps. Airport Safety Review Areas 1 and 2 are fully within AR3. Therefore, the mapping of AR3 areas for these airports will be sufficient and will make it easier for the public and staff to determine the applicability of all Development Code requirements.

The mapping criteria for AR3 are as follows: 1) The area within one mile outside the 65 Ldn noise contour, for those public use airports with adopted noise contours; 2) The area within one mile of the outer boundaries of the airport ownership, for those public use airports without adopted noise contours; 3) The area within 10,000 feet from an airport runway for runways that are designed for visual and instrument operations or are designed to be used by aircraft other than propeller driven aircraft of 12,500 pounds maximum gross weight and less (this only

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applies to four airports – Ontario International, San Bernardino International, Southern California Logistics, and Chino); 4) The safety or referral areas published in an adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and 5) The area outside the 65 Ldn noise contour for a heliport but within one half (1/2) mile of such line. (There are no public use heliports with San Bernardino County.)

In identifying the airport influence areas for the various airports within the County, staff realized that the noise contours for San Bernardino International Airport (the old Norton AFB) and Southern California Logistics Airport (the old George AFB) have changed due to the change of aircraft using both airports. Southern California Logistics Airport has published new noise contours, and the proposed amendment would simply reflect the new contour lines. San Bernardino International Airport has not published new noise contours, but it has published its airport influence area. This amendment would adopt this influence area. Three additional airports, Apple Valley, Barstow-Daggett, and Twentynine Palms, have published noise contours in their respective Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plans. This proposed General Plan Amendment would add these contour lines to the hazard maps.

These amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines as they do not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment as they only amend 14 County hazard maps to recognize new earthquake faults zones that are already in effect in accordance with the State Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Act, they map additional geologic hazard areas for the safety of the property owners and the public, and they map the airport influence areas in accordance with State law. All of these changes are for the protection of the environment and to enhance the safety of the citizens of the County.

FINDINGS:

1. The proposed safety element changes are in the public interest and there will be a community benefit because they give the public additional information to the hazards that exist in the specific areas of each map. Other existing and permitted uses will not be compromised.
2. The proposed safety element changes are consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan as follows:

Policy GE-1(a)(iv): The County will maintain clear and comprehensive mapping of all geologic hazards.

Policy GE-7: The County shall reserve the right to require site-specific geotechnical analysis and mitigation for development located contiguous to potentially active faults, if deemed necessary by the County Geologist.

Policy AV-1: Airport Safety Review Areas are categorized as . . . [those areas] which [are] defined within adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plans, [or] . . . where there is no adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan, they are generally categorized [as defined in the County Development Code].

3. The proposed safety element changes do not conflict with provisions of the Development Code, or any applicable specific plan.
4. The proposed safety element changes will not have a substantial adverse effect on surrounding property.

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5. The proposed safety element changes are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines as they do not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Proposed General Plan Amendments to the Safety Element](#)